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What's The CIA Up To?

An expert witness at the trial of a Frenchman and a Briton charged with flying seven bombers from the United States to Portugal last year has testified that this was in fact a secret operation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Those not privy to all that is known at this point are in no position to judge whether the testimony of Martin Calder, a prominent aviation writer and former consultant to various federal agencies, is accurate. The truth of the matter may, and likely will, never become known to the public.

But the claim that the CIA clandestinely supplied Portugal with military aircraft contrary to law raises once again the question whether the operations of this agency should not be subjected to more careful review by Congress. If the CIA is engaged in activities which, as in the Portugal case, might significantly affect U. S. foreign policy and our relations with other countries, the nature and extent of that involvement should be known to those in Congress most directly concerned with such matters.

This means, in particular, Senate Foreign Relations Committee members. It is their province to study and advise on foreign affairs. They are handicapped in this to some extent if their conclusions must be drawn without knowing what the CIA is up to in this field.

The Portugal episode suggests, as have episodes brought to light earlier, that the CIA is up to something besides the gathering of intelligence. Rejection of the resolution to have the Senate Foreign Relations Committee represented on the CIA oversight committee should be reconsidered. Such representation, coupled with a more formal and careful review of CIA operations, is warranted by circumstances.

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